



California's libraries are facing one of the most critical moments in our collective history.

I know it has been hard to see branches closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of us are facing challenges at home and in our communities. One thing that we've seen repeatedly, most recently in the aftermath of the fire at Porterville, is that California's libraries play an invaluable role in supporting their communities in times of need.

Whether it's providing access to accurate information and digital content or connecting library users with local public health resources and services, libraries across the state are responding creatively and proactively to this health emergency.

When all this ends, which it will, more Californians than ever will be calling on their libraries for help in bringing their lives back in order. Help in finding a job. Help training for one. Help in connecting kids to learning resources. Help for families in accessing social services. And all the other ways that libraries provide customized help to meet individual needs.

Over the next weeks, please remember none of us are alone. There are countless resources for libraries and library staff on how to safely serve our communities. Here are a few:

- The American Library Association has created a [resource page](#) for libraries and library staff, including COVID-19 news and updates, library-specific policy suggestions and information about pandemic education, prevention and preparation.
- Libraries play an essential role in slowing the spread of this virus disease by halting the spread of misinformation. The U.S. Government Publishing Office's Federal Depository Library Program is holding a library-oriented webinar, "[Coronavirus Frauds and Scams,](#)" on April 8.
- Across the state, homebound parents and children are looking for ways to learn and pass the time. Libraries have the ability to provide critical support and virtual resources for them. The Library of Congress has

curated a selection of [helpful resources](#) for students of all ages. There's also a page maintained by the Department of Education and another at the [State Library's website](#).

- A partnership between the California Library Association and California State Library created a [California-specific COVID-19 resource page](#). We encourage California library staff to submit additional resources and resource categories and to share the page with colleagues.

Libraries are already responding to this change from in-person *and* online to online. I watched several terrific digital storytimes over the past week and seen multiple examples of reassuring and helpful outreach on multiple platforms. Of course, has anyone met a librarian who wasn't creative and resourceful?

It's humbling to see all that's being done by libraries and others to respond to this unprecedented health emergency. It's hard work that can fray the nerves. The State Library is using a hashtag, #LibrariesStrong, which you can share on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) how you're supporting your communities during the COVID-19 pandemic through digital programs and services. Working together, we'll all get through this.

Be safe. Be positive. Keep smiling.

Greg Lucas